AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A method of cutting segments to desired lengths from a strip of elastomeric material, the segments has a width W, the elastomeric strip being formed of a plurality tire components, at least one of the tire components being a cord reinforced component, the cords being substantially parallel and oriented in the direction of a cutting path formed across the width W of the strip; the method comprising:

moving on ultrasonic knife into cutting engagement of the elastomeric strip while supporting the strip along the cutting path;

cutting the segment at a skive angle α; and

impacting a cord of the cord reinforced component lifting said cord over the ultrasonic knife as the segment is being cut, the impacted cord being at a cut end adjacent the cutting path.

2. (original) The method of cutting segments of claim 1 further comprises the step of:

orienting a cutting edge on the ultrasonic knife inclined at an acute angle β relative to the strip cutting path.

3. (original) The method of cutting segments of claim 1 further comprises the steps of movably restraining the strip ahead of the cutting.

4. (original) The method of cutting segments of claim 1 wherein the steps of supporting the strip including supporting the strip at an angle $\theta 1$, less than the skive angle α on one side of the cutting path and an angle $\theta 2$ greater than the skive angle α on the opposite side of the cutting path.

5. (original) The method of cutting segments of claim 4, wherein the location of the impacted cord occurs approximately at the location wherein the supporting angle changes for $\theta 1$ to $\theta 2$.

6. (original) The method of claim 2 further comprises the step of positioning the cutting edge of the ultrasonic knife at a gap distance (d) above the strip slightly less than or slightly to the greater than thickness of the cord reinforced component.

7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein the step of cutting further includes cutting the segment wherein a plurality of cords are beneath and adjacent a flat cut surface.

Claims 8-19 (canceled)